Easter

Exploring the Resurrection of Jesus



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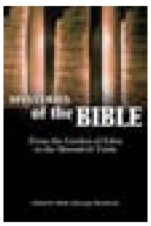
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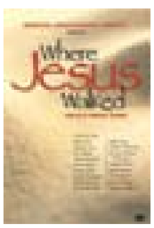
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Mysteries of the Bible: From the Garden of Eden to the Shroud of Turin

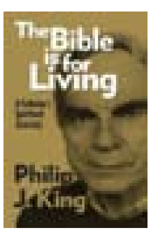
Edited by Molly Dewsnap Meinhardt

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Edited by Molly Dewsnap Meinhardt

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Introduction

Not even the intense drama and tragedy of Jesus' trial, passion, death and burial can prepare one for the utter shock at what comes next in the well-known story: Jesus' resurrection. The Gospels recount varying stories of the disciples' astonishment and confusion as they encounter the resurrected Jesus.

The Gospel of Luke tells of one such meeting on the road to Emmaus. There is considerable controversy among archaeologists as to which among nine sites may be identified as Biblical Emmaus. In "Emmaus: Where Christ Appeared," Hershel Shanks puts forth Emmaus Nicopolis as the leading contender.

What did the concept of resurrection mean to the earliest Christians? In what ways did it evolve from, and depart from, contemporaneous ideas about death and the afterlife? Author N.T. Wright traces the origins of the idea of bodily resurrection to first-century Judaism in "The Resurrection of Resurrection."

And what about the wide range of modern interpretations of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ? In "Thinking about Easter," Markus J. Borg questions just how literal and physical we should take the gospel accounts of the resurrected Jesus to be.

The interpretation of the Gospel of Mark in particular challenges Bible scholars because at least nine versions of its conclusion have been identified in 1,700 surviving ancient Greek manuscripts and early translations. In "To Be Continued…" author Michael W. Holmes stresses the importance of piecing together the end Mark's resurrection story.

All questions of historicity and scholarship aside, the encounters of the resurrected Jesus with his disciples have been well-loved artistic subjects for centuries. A carved ivory plaque from northern Spain in the 12th century depicts two scenes, the meeting of Jesus and his disciples on the road to Emmaus and Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene outside the empty tomb. In "The Resurrection," this intricate carving accompanies a poem by the medieval French bishop Marbod of Rennes contemplating Jesus' choice of Mary Magdalene as the first witness of the

Resurrection. The 1898 painting *Apostles Peter and John Hurry to the Tomb on the Morning of the Resurrection* by Swiss artist Eugene Burn and captures the next event in the resurrection story. The disciples Peter and John hurry to investigate the story Mary Magdalene has just told them of the empty tomb with the stone rolled away. “To the Tomb” explains the disciples’ mixed emotions and the significance of the missing tomb in this evocative painting.

Sara Murphy
February 2010

Emmaus Where Christ Appeared

Many sites vie for the honor, but Emmaus-Nicopolis is the leading contender

By Hershel Shanks



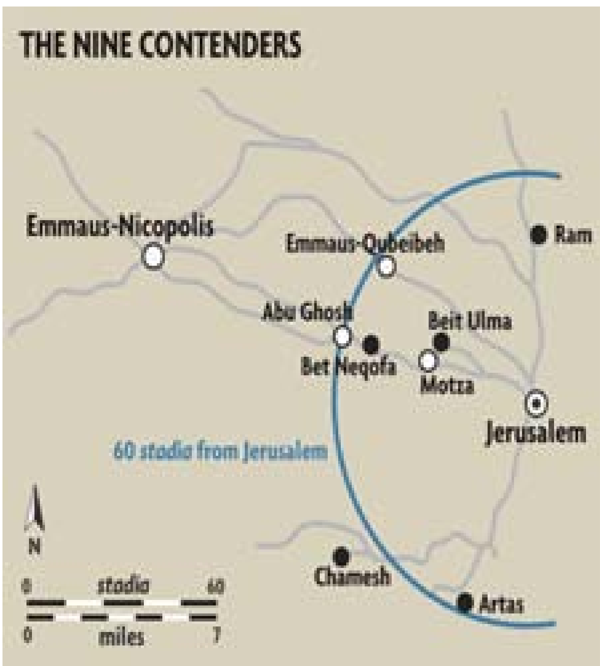
Scala/Art Resource, NY

In the breaking of the bread, two disciples finally recognize the resurrected Jesus in this 1648 painting by Rembrandt van Rijn, titled The Supper at Emmaus. Identifying Biblical Emmaus has been difficult because so many sites bear claims to the honored title.

At dawn the tomb of Jesus was found empty. Later that very day two of the disciples, Cleopas and another unnamed, were walking on the road to Emmaus when Jesus appeared to them, but they did not recognize him. As they drew near Emmaus, Jesus went to go on, but they pressed him to stay with them, saying, “It is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” At dinner, Jesus blessed the bread and gave it to them and “their eyes were opened and they recognized him.” All this occurred at a place called Emmaus. That same hour they returned to Jerusalem, where they told the others what had happened. And he appeared to them again! Jesus ate some fish that they gave to him, showing that he had been resurrected bodily. Then he led them out to Bethany on the Mount of Olives, where he blessed them and “was carried up into heaven” (see Luke 24:13–53).

This episode from the Gospel of Luke contains the only mention of Emmaus in the entire New Testament. But Jesus' appearance to his disciples on the road to Emmaus and at dinner is one of only five post-Resurrection appearances recorded in the Gospels.

Where Emmaus was located has been a matter of considerable scholarly controversy. There are at least nine candidates. Only four, however, are serious contenders. Each has three main components that contribute to its possible identification as Emmaus: a spring [Emmaus means "warm well"], a distance of at least 60 *stadia* (almost 7 miles) from Jerusalem, and a location along a major ancient road. Each also has its problems. How do we decide which one (if any) is the New Testament Emmaus?



Nine contenders for Emmaus lay scattered on ancient roads outside Jerusalem. Each is either (1) historically identified as Emmaus, such as Emmaus-Nicopolis since the fourth century and Emmaus-Quebeibeh and Abu Ghosh since the Crusader period, or (2) their names have vestiges of a Greek word similar to Emmaus, such as Motza. Emmaus Nicopolis has both the earliest attestation as Emmaus and its Arabic name, Amwas, may preserve its ancient name Emmaus. Many of the sites have springs that led people to assume them to be Emmaus. All are at least 7 miles from Jerusalem and are located along a major ancient road. Emmaus-Nicopolis is by far the farthest from the Holy City, approximately 17 miles away. Could a site that far from Jerusalem be the ancient village of Emmaus?

Emmaus, or Emmaus-Nicopolis, is the leading contender. Another possibility is Emmaus-Qubeibeh, northwest of Jerusalem (see Another Contender for the Honor: Emmaus-Qubeibeh); an old Roman fort near this site was named *Castellum Emmaus* in the Crusader period. A third contender is Abu Ghosh, just outside of Jerusalem. A spring there may have led some Crusaders to identify it as Emmaus; they built the castle Fontenoide and a church there in 1141. The fourth candidate is Qaloniyeh (ancient Colonia; modern Motza). The Latin for Motza could be *Amassa*; the Greek form, *Ammaous*, mentioned by the turn-of-the-era Jewish historian Josephus, is obviously similar to Emmaus.[1]

The problem with these last three suggestions is that none of them is attested as Emmaus earlier than the Crusader period.

But the first site mentioned, Emmaus-Nicopolis, has its problems too. It is, by the shortest route, about 17 miles from Jerusalem. According to the Gospel of Luke, the disciples “walked” from Jerusalem to Emmaus, ate a meal and then went back to Jerusalem, apparently all in the same day. Is that plausible?

Another problem for Emmaus-Nicopolis concerns the New Testament text. If you look at the Lucan text in your favorite translation, at the first mention of Emmaus it probably says that the village is 7 miles from Jerusalem, or 60 *stadia* in the Greek text from which the translation is taken. If 60 *stadia* is about 7 miles (as it is; a Roman stadium is 607 English feet), then a site at least 17 miles from Jerusalem does not appear to qualify. It’s much too far.

So there are two problems with identifying Emmaus-Nicopolis as New Testament Emmaus: First, the disciples would have had to walk about 35 miles in one day. Second, Luke says Emmaus is only 7 miles (60 *stadia*) from Jerusalem.

Consider the second question first: True, if you look at your Bible you will probably find that Luke says Emmaus is 7 miles from Jerusalem. But look at Luke 24:13 in the New Revised Standard Version; there you will find a footnote that says that “other ancient authorities read 160 *stadia*.” That figure (approximately 18 miles) fits quite nicely with Emmaus-Nicopolis.

There is plenty of evidence to support both sides of this textual argument— 60 versus 160 *stadia*. The often-authoritative fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus says 160 *stadia*. On the other hand, the other two of the great trio of ancient Greek Bibles, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Alexandrinus, both say 60. And each side can assemble a long list of other manuscripts favoring it, although the list containing 60 *stadia* is longer. On the other hand, Eusebius (third–fourth-century author of the famous *Onomasticon*), Jerome (fourth-century church father and translator of the Bible and the *Onomasticon* into Latin), Origen (third-century church father) and Sozomen (fifth-century church historian) all opt for 160 *stadia* as the correct Lucan text, thus supporting Emmaus-Nicopolis as the best candidate for New Testament Emmaus. Emmaus-Nicopolis is assumed to be the site of the Lucan Emmaus by almost all Christian pilgrim texts from the fourth century onward.

Modern scholars are just as divided as the ancient sources. According to *Eerdman’s Dictionary of the Bible*, “None [of the leading candidates for Biblical Emmaus] has won

widespread approval." The *Anchor Bible Dictionary* says 60 *stadia* is "the better reading." The Editorial Committee of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament calls the reading of 160 *stadia* a "scribal blunder," the result of patristic efforts to confirm the site of Nicopolis as Biblical Emmaus. On the other hand, three prominent Israeli scholars in their recent *Tabula Imperii Romani Judaea-Palaestina* tell us that New Testament Emmaus is "probably Emmaus-Nicopolis."[2]

What about the first problem? Is it reasonable to think that the disciples could walk more than 35 miles in a day? Here again, scholars are divided: The distance makes the reading of 160 *stadia*, according to the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, "surely wrong"; people could not walk 35 miles in a day. On the other hand, "Anyone familiar with Palestinian Bedouin or Arabs in a pre-automotive culture would not doubt the disciples' ability to walk forty miles in a day," says the *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*.



Garo Nalbandian

"I baptize with water." The Byzantine trefoil baptismal font at Emmaus is one of the best preserved in the Holy Land. Two steps lead down into the basin where the penitent would stand when the priest poured water over him (the basin is not large enough for total immersion). Only a bishopric seat would have a baptismal font in a separate building, rather than as part of the church, which gives further evidence of the importance of Emmaus in the Byzantine period.

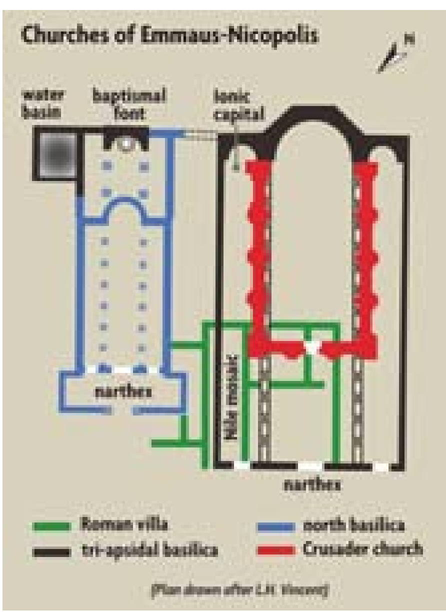
Someone recently identified another problem: The disciples arrived at Emmaus when it was "toward evening and the day ... far spent" (Luke 24:29). Would the disciples have eaten and then departed for Jerusalem after dark? No. In the orient, evening begins at 12 o'clock noon, when the sun begins to go down. They would have left in the early afternoon. Once they had finished their meal, they would have departed immediately to spread the good news. Moreover, although the text does not specify this, it is possible that they took a donkey or even ran part of

the way out of sheer excitement in order to complete their trip to Jerusalem as quickly as possible and tell the other disciples of the appearance of the risen Lord.



Hershel Shanks

Emmaus's main church was built up over the centuries. Excavators believe that the earliest stratum is Herodian and may include remnants of a house that came to be revered as the "Cleopas House," where Jesus broke bread and was recognized by his disciples after the Resurrection. A Byzantine triapsidal basilica was built over the Roman remains. Sources as early as Eusebius and Jerome considered this village to be the actual site of Jesus' appearance. The Crusaders built a church upon the old Byzantine remains, and its walls can still be seen today.



The three churches at Emmaus were explored in the 1920s by Dominican priest Louis-Hugues Vincent. His drawing depicts his findings with the dates he considered accurate. The large southern basilica (black lines) he dated prior to 529. The smaller, northern church (blue) he considered to be of a later construction. The Crusader church (12th century, red) was built upon the remains of the Byzantine basilica, which in turn was built over the remnants of a Roman house (green). The current excavators now date the northern church prior to 430 because they found a mosaic decorated with crosses (which were banned by Emperor Theodosius that year) and a coin from the reign of Emperor Elagabalus (218–222 A.D.).

In modern times Emmaus-Nicopolis was identified as New Testament Emmaus by the American Orientalist Edward Robinson when he canvassed the Holy Land in the mid-19th century. Robinson identified hundreds of Biblical sites, often on the basis of the survival of the

Biblical name in current Arabic names. For example, the Arabic place-name Seilun identified Shiloh; Beitun identified Bethel; and Amwas (‘Imwas), the Arab village at the site of Emmaus-Nicopolis, identified Emmaus. It occupies a strategic position near Latrun, on the ancient road from the coast up to Jerusalem.



Photos by Garo Nalbandian

“One God, Blessed be his name forever” is inscribed on this fifth–sixth-century A.D. pseudo-Ionic capital, which was discovered in 1879. The first part, on one side, is in Greek; the second part is in Samaritan script. Some scholars believe the first side to be a reflection of Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one,” and the second side to be a reflection of Psalm 72:19, “And blessed be his glorious name forever.”



South of the village, Robinson also found the remains of an old church constructed of long, well-cut stones, with a semi-circular apse still standing at the end. In 1879 a French architect named Joseph Guillemot conducted the first archaeological excavation at the site and found, in the north apse of what was originally a triapsidal church, a pseudo-Ionic capital inscribed on one side, “One God,” and on the other, “Blessed be his name forever” (cf. Psalm

72:19). The first side is in Greek, the other side in what was thought to be Hebrew but is now identified by Israeli scholar Leah di Segni as Samaritan. At first the two inscriptions seemed to be from two different eras, but it is more likely that the capital dates to the fifth or sixth century A.D. The first side of the inscription (“God is one”) may be, the current excavators suggest, an echo of Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.” The second inscription testifies to the presence of Samaritans (as well as Jews, Christians and Romans) in Emmaus. In any event, as subsequent Christian finds seem to make clear, the locals identified the site early on as the place of Jesus’ post-Resurrection appearance.[3]

Found near a Roman grave this Egyptian scarab from the 20th to 19th centuries B.C. depicts a “fighting god,” his fists clenched. Under his left arm is a uraeus— the typical snake symbol of ancient Egyptian kings. How did this Egyptian scarab find its way to Emmaus? It may have been a talisman of the family buried in the grave, or there may be more ancient remains from the Early to Middle Bronze Age hiding deeper down in the strata of Emmaus.



Hershel Shanks

Between 1924 and 1930, Louis-Hugues Vincent, a prominent Dominican priest at the École Biblique et Archéologique Française in Jerusalem, excavated this church. In one corner of the nave, he found what he regarded as the remains of an earlier domestic structure that he dated to the Roman period. It was built of Herodian ashlars, and even earlier Hasmonean coins were found there. Perhaps the church was purposely built atop this house because it was thought to be “Cleopas’s House,” where the disciples recognized the resurrected Jesus. Perhaps this belief occasioned the construction of the church above the house. The new excavation team thinks the site may have been a *domus ecclesia*, a place of Christian worship before Constantine’s time (early fourth century). They also suggest that a fourth-century Byzantine chapel may have been erected on the site prior to the subsequent building of the triapsidal basilical church in the fifth century.

North of the church— and associated with it— Vincent identified an impressive structure as a baptistery.[4] Within the baptistery is a beautiful trefoil baptismal font, one of the best-preserved baptismal fonts in the Holy Land. The baptistery building was supported by four

columns. One of the column bases of the baptistery is still *in situ*. During this early period, only at bishopric seats were baptisteries in separate structures. This architectural feature is another indication of the city's importance to Byzantine Christians.

In front of the baptistery, Father Vincent also excavated another church, which lies just north of the remains of the triapsidal church. Within the triapsidal church, he also explored a third church, which he attributed to the Crusader period (12th century). Although the precise dates for these structures are disputed, it appears clear that, at a very early period, the site was thought to be Emmaus of the New Testament and became an important center of Christian worship and pilgrimage. It is uncertain whether the site's Christian importance resulted from its association with New Testament Emmaus or, on the other hand, a manufactured association led to the site's Christian importance. This remains a question that can never be answered definitively.



Pavel Shrago/The Old Jaffa Museum of Antiquities

A Hebrew memorial was found in Abu Kabir, near Jaffa, that mentions the city of Emmaus in an epitaph for "Eleazar, the son of Yehoshua. Peace from Emmaus. Peace." The inscribed stone tablet dates to the Roman-Byzantine period when it was common to mention one's birthplace in an epitaph. Eleazar was clearly proud of the city from which he had come.

More than 25 years ago, the current director of German archaeological work in the Holy Land, Karl-Heinz Fleckenstein, and his wife, Louisa, were guiding tours of Christian sites and became fascinated with Emmaus-Nicopolis. At that time, the site was abandoned and neglected. The Fleckensteins decided to try to mount an archaeological expedition to uncover new evidence for the correct identification of the site and the dates of many of its structures. The excavation, which finally began in 1993 and continued until 2005, was sponsored by a consortium of institutions including the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem, represented by the well-known scholar Father Michele Piccirillo. The Fleckensteins and archaeologist Mikko Louhivuori

served as principal investigators. Since 2005 the excavators have been studying the finds and preparing an excavation report, but they also hope to return to the field.



Garo Nalbandian

"In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Beautiful is the city of the Christians" reads this Byzantine-period stone tablet. It was found in 1894 on a ridge west of the Arab village of Amwas (Emmaus-Nicopolis), where excavators believe they have uncovered ancient Emmaus. The plaque indicates that the city was predominantly Christian in the Byzantine period.





Garo Nalbandian

Many mosaics have been found at Emmaus-Nicopolis— most from the Byzantine period. Flora and fauna graced the floor of the northern nave of the fifth-century Byzantine church. Two birds sit peacefully in a papyrus plant. More sinister happenings occur in other panels of the floor; a lion stalks his prey; a gazelle loses its life to a hungry leopard. The excavators call it the "Nile Mosaic" and see it as representing the fight between Good and Evil.

The Fleckensteins believe that the site was identified as New Testament Emmaus as early as the third century. Of course, the later a contending site was identified as Emmaus, the less likely it is to be Emmaus of the New Testament. The oldest identification of Emmaus-Nicopolis does seem to go back much further than that of any of the other contenders.

In 130 A.D. an earthquake destroyed much of the site. For nearly a century thereafter, it was little more than a small village. One of the villagers, however, became prominent and influential: Sextus Julius Africanus was a Christian historian, traveler and Roman prefect. Africanus wrote a five-volume history of the world from the Creation to 221 A.D. (the *Chronografiai*). The well-known Church father Origen called Africanus his “brother in God through Jesus Christ.” In 222 Africanus led a delegation to Rome to seek the designation of *polis* for his city. The petition was granted by the emperor Elagabalus, and the city was named Emmaus-Nicopolis, the “victorious city of Emmaus.” As Emmaus-Nicopolis, the city began to thrive once again.

One never knows what one will find in an archaeological excavation. That is part of what makes it so exciting— and mysterious. Certainly one of the most unexpected finds at Emmaus was an Egyptian scarab of the Hyksos type. It depicts a masculine figure wearing a tall, cylindrical head cover. His hands are in the position of a “fighting god” with clenched fists. Under his left fist is a *uraeus* (serpent), the symbol of ancient Egyptian kings.[5] The scarab dates to about 1800 B.C. What in the world was it doing at Emmaus? It was found near a Roman grave and may have been a talisman passed down through the generations. Or perhaps there was an Egyptian city here in the Middle Bronze Age, a city that still lies buried deep underground, awaiting discovery by another team of archaeologists. A grave from this period is said to have been found in nearby Neve Shalom. In the meantime, Middle Bronze specialists must now consider the significance of an Egyptian scarab found at Emmaus-Nicopolis.[6]

Most of the archaeological evidence uncovered here, however, comes from the Byzantine period but includes evidence from Hellenistic and Roman periods as well.

Jews, Samaritans, Romans and, later, Christians all lived here in what must have been a major town.

In the city museum of Jaffa, just south of Tel Aviv, is a fragmentary inscription from a Jewish tombstone that reads in Hebrew: “This is the resting place of Eleazar, son of Yehoshua. Peace from Emmaus. Peace.” According to Shimshon Seder, director of the museum, the tombstone was found in Abu Kabir (between Tel Aviv and Jaffa), about 17 miles from Emmaus-

Nicopolis, and dates to the Roman-Byzantine era. Apparently this Eleazar hailed from Emmaus, most likely Emmaus-Nicopolis, which is closer to the find-spot than any of the other contenders. Eleazar was doubtless proud of coming from such an important town, and it was the custom at the time to indicate one's hometown in an epitaph. This inscription is further evidence of the probable early identification of the site as New Testament Emmaus and is important for the epigraphic evidence of Emmaus written in Hebrew script.[7]

By the Byzantine period, the evidence suggests that Emmaus had become a fully Christian city. In 1894 a shattered stone plaque was discovered on a ridge to the west, overlooking Emmaus. The plaque, which cannot date epigraphically before the fourth century A.D., is now in the museum of the White Fathers adjacent to the Church of St. Anne in Jerusalem and reads in Greek: "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, beautiful is the city of the Christians."

Since this inscription was found overlooking Emmaus, it is likely that it came from there. It may have stood over the portal of a church.[8]

The remains of the fifth-century Byzantine basilica (the south church) were overbuilt by the Crusader church, which still dominates the site. In the narthex area of the basilica (in front of the nave), the excavation team uncovered a graceful sixth-century A.D. mosaic featuring a chalice overflowing with water from which two birds are drinking. It is not difficult to imagine a variety of symbolic interpretations. The mosaic also includes fragments of fish, a bull, the head of a lamb, and other animals. In the middle is an inscription reading *Kyrie Eleison* ("Lord, Have Mercy") and the genitive (possessive) form of the name Titus.

Beneath a mosaic in the south church, the excavators found a line of eight skeletons, all facing east toward the rising sun (as do churches from this period), with their arms crossed over their chests in Christian penitence, perhaps representing the cross. A radiocarbon test performed by the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel, indicates that the bones date somewhere between 260 and 420 A.D. They are probably the bones of monks who served in the church and who were buried without grave goods.

Another mosaic, found in the nave of the south church (where Vincent identified the Roman house), resembles the "Nile" scenes popular in the Byzantine period. In one panel a leopard attacks a gazelle; in another a lion takes down his prey. These representations of the danger of the wild contrast with nearby scenes of birds nestled peacefully in papyrus plants. These contradictory images are a common motif used by early Christian artists, sometimes said

to symbolize the fight between Good and Evil. In his interpretation, Dr. Fleckenstein sees a reflection of the glorious appearance of the risen Jesus to his disciples in Emmaus after the "bloody and cruel events on Golgatha."[9]



Garo Nalbandian

Jewish presence at Emmaus is evident in the rock-cut graves from the Herodian period that employed typical Jewish burial practices. The deceased was first placed in a niche (loculus in English, kokh in Hebrew) in the cave wall deep enough to hold the body. Three of these niches can be seen in this picture. The stone at the left of the picture above appears to be a device with which to block the door. After a year, when the flesh had fallen away, the deceased's bones were placed in a limestone bone box, or ossuary. The close up at right shows typical decoration on Jewish ossuaries of the time.

The excavators have uncovered a wide range of Christian artifacts, unfortunately often of uncertain date but mainly of the Byzantine period. For example, one of the hundreds of clay oil lamps from the Byzantine period (fourth–seventh centuries) is inscribed: "May the light of Christ shine on everyone" (cf. John 1:9). Others were decorated with depictions of ladders that perhaps symbolize the steps down into a baptismal font. These lamps are probably to be associated with the baptistery mentioned earlier.



Hershel Shanks

The site is peppered with tombs of various kinds from many different periods. A number of them have recently been excavated.



Garo Nalbandian

The stone was rolled away. The burial caves from the Herodian period were often closed with a rolling stone to keep people and animals from entering the tomb, but the stone could also be moved aside when the time came for family to enter. This rolling stone from Emmaus-Nicopolis found in front of one of the caves is only partially cut, as if the stone mason had finished work for the day, but then never returned.

One of the tombs revealed clear evidence of a Jewish presence in Jesus' time: four ossuaries. Limestone bone boxes called ossuaries were used by Jews for secondary burial of bones, only from about 20 B.C. to 70 A.D. Thousands of ossuaries have been found in the Jerusalem area. The deceased was initially laid to rest on a stone bench in a cave or in a long rock cavity called a *koch* in Hebrew (plural, *kochim*) and a loculus in English (plural, *loculi*). About a year later, after the flesh had desiccated and fallen away, the bones were placed in an ossuary. Near the burial cave with these ossuaries were two rolling stones, presumably used to close tombs, much like those that must have closed Jesus' tomb in Jerusalem. But these were only partially cut. Parts of the stones were still attached to the bedrock, as if the stone cutter had stopped for the day, intending to return to work in the morning.

Of the thousands of coins the excavators recovered, one is especially interesting: a coin of Valerius Gratus (15–26 A.D.). He was the Roman procurator who preceded Pontius Pilate. Gratus restructured the Temple governance in Jerusalem and appointed first Annas and then Caiaphas as High Priests.

We have emphasized the Christian connections with Emmaus. But, in addition to Jews and Samaritans, the city boasted an important Roman population. Indeed, probably the most elegant structure in the ancient city was a Roman villa that was found northwest of the basilicas and is being excavated by the current team. This villa had a mosaic floor and what appears to be the remains of a dye industry. Three basins carved into the rock permitted the passage of liquids

from one basin to the other. A coin from the reign of Emperor Elagabalus (218–222 A.D.) was found, providing a probable date for the structure. As for the occupants, only a comb was found that might be connected to the lady of the house.

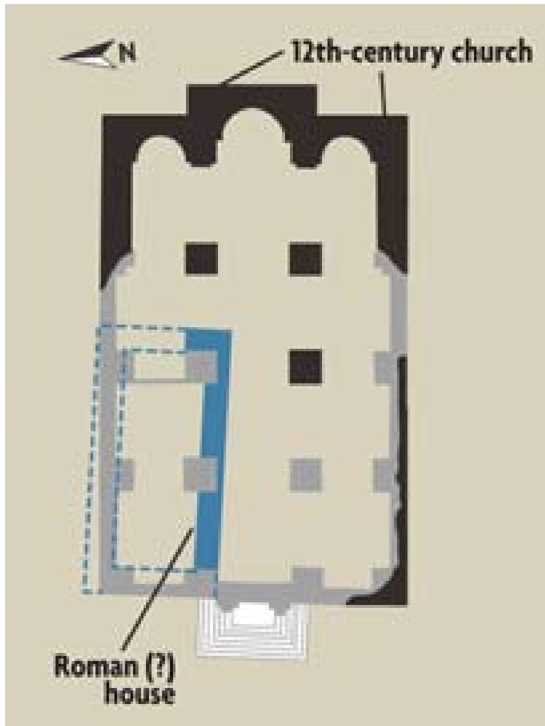
The continuing excavation of the site promises to shed new light on the intriguing history of Emmaus-Nicopolis.

Kathleen E. Miller provided research, reporting and translation of the German for this article.

Another Contender for the Honor

Emmaus-Qubeibeh

Sidebar to: Emmaus: Where Christ Appeared



The principal competitor of Nicopolis as New Testament Emmaus is el-Qubeibeh, often referred to as Emmaus-Qubeibeh.

The site lies 8 miles northwest of Jerusalem. This fits nicely with 60 stadia as the distance between Emmaus and Jerusalem, as specified in most of the ancient copies of the Gospel of Luke. The competitive site of Emmaus-Nicopolis is a viable candidate for New Testament Emmaus only if these ancient witnesses are wrong and the texts that specify 160 stadia are right.

On the other hand, el-Qubeibeh was never identified as Emmaus until the Crusader period. The earliest reference to the site as Emmaus is in 1290. The suspicion of course is that the Crusaders decided that the site then known only as Qubeibeh was in fact Emmaus because they wanted a spot to point to for pilgrims to the Holy Land— and Qubeibeh fit the distance called for by most copies of the Gospel of Luke. (For the same reason, so the argument goes, some Crusaders also identified Abu Ghosh, just outside of Jerusalem, as Emmaus.)

Scholars who opt for Emmaus-Nicopolis sometimes say that nothing earlier has been found at Emmaus-Qubeibeh. Thus, if true, Qubeibeh was not mentioned as Emmaus until the Crusader period, and nothing has been found at the site earlier than this.

But this is not correct. Qubeibeh was excavated in the early 1940s by Bellarmino Bagatti of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Bagatti describes the site as “a lovely place, marked by shady pines and green olive trees. It gives the impression of an oasis in the midst of the bare tawny hills in which it is located.”[1]



Library of Congress, lc-matpc-06274/lifeintheholyland.com

The site is dominated by a Crusader period triapsidal church, in one corner of which was an earlier building that may go back to the time of Jesus, according to Bagatti. (Interestingly, the location of this Roman-period house in the northwestern corner of the later church is the same as the Roman house in the church at Emmaus-Nicopolis.) He claims to have found traces of other dwellings that go back as far as the Hellenistic period.

His excavations also unearthed pottery sherds from the Roman period, including a typical Herodian oil lamp, as well as coins securely dated from the third century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. Bagatti concluded there was a village here in the Roman period, although its size could not be determined precisely.

Was this village New Testament Emmaus, as the Crusaders claimed?

The Resurrection of Resurrection

Christianity was born into a world where one of its central tenets, the resurrection of the dead, was widely recognized as false—except, of course, by Judaism.

By N.T. Wright

Jews believed in resurrection, Greeks believed in immortality. So I was taught many years ago. But like so many generalizations, this one isn't even half true. There was a spectrum of beliefs about the afterlife in first-century Judaism, just as there was in the Greco-Roman world. The differences between these two sets of views and those that developed among the early Christians are startling.

Let's begin with the Greeks. Some Greeks (and Romans) thought death the complete end; most, however, envisaged a continuing, shadowy existence in Hades. Homer, for example, tells of a murky world full of witless, gibbering shadows that must drink sacrificial blood before they can think straight, let alone talk. For Homer, Hades was no fun.[1] The "soul" in Homer, though, was not the "real person," the immortal element hidden inside a body, but rather the evanescent breath that escaped. The true self remained lifeless on the ground.

But there are happier variations on the theme. For Platonists, death's release of the soul from its prison was cause for rejoicing. And even within Homer's scheme, some heroes might conceivably make their way to the Elysian fields, to the Isles of the Blessed, or, in some very rare cases, to the abode of the gods themselves. Hercules, then the Hellenistic rulers and finally the Roman emperors were believed to follow this route. Mystery cults enabled initiates to enjoy a blessed state in the present, which would, it was hoped, continue after death.

All, however, were agreed: There was no resurrection. Death could not be reversed. Homer said it; Aeschylus and Sophocles seconded it. "What's it like down there?" asks a man of his departed friend, in a third-century B.C.E. epigram. "Very dark," comes the reply. "Any way back up?" "It's a lie!"

In Greek thought, the living could establish contact with the dead through various forms of necromancy; they might even receive ghostly visitations. But neither experience amounts to what pagan writers themselves referred to as "resurrection," or the return to life, which they all denied. Thus, Christianity was born into a world where one of its central tenets, resurrection, was universally recognized as false.

Except, of course, in Judaism. Resurrection was a late arrival on the scene in classic biblical writing, however. Much of the Hebrew Bible assumes that the dead are in Sheol, which sometimes looks uncomfortably like Hades: "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any that go down into silence" (Psalm 115:17). Clear statements of resurrection are extremely rare.[2] Daniel 12 is the most blatant, and remembered as such for centuries afterwards: "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). Daniel is, however, the latest book of the Hebrew Bible.

In the postbiblical period, the Jewish group known as the Sadducees famously denied the future life altogether. The Sadducees, according to the first-century C.E. Jewish historian Josephus, held that "the soul perishes along with the body" (*Jewish Antiquities* 18.16). Other Jews spoke, platonically, of a disembodied immortality; according to the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, at death the philosopher's soul would assume "a higher existence, immortal and uncreated."[3] Still others appear to display some kind of resurrection belief, as in Josephus and the Wisdom of Solomon. "In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over people, and the Lord will reign over them for ever" (Wisdom of Solomon 3:7–8).[4] The clearest statements of resurrection after Daniel 12, however, are found in 2 Maccabees, the Mishnah and the later rabbinic writings. In 2 Maccabees, a martyr on the verge of death puts out his tongue, stretches out his arms and declares: "I got these from Heaven, and because of his Laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to get them back again" (2 Maccabees 7:11). According to Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 10.1, "All Israelites have a share in the world to come;…and these are they that have no share in the world to come: he that says that there is no resurrection of the dead prescribed in the Law."

Remember, resurrection does not mean being "raised to heaven" or "taken up in glory." Neither Elijah nor Enoch had been resurrected in the sense that Daniel, 2 Maccabees and the rabbis meant it; nor, for that matter, had anyone else. Resurrection will happen only to people who are already dead. To speak of the destruction of the body and the continuing existence, however blessed, of something else (call it a "soul" for the sake of argument) is not to speak of resurrection, but simply of death itself. "Resurrection" is not simply death from another viewpoint; it is the reversal of death, its cancellation, the destruction of its power. That is what pagans

denied, and what Daniel, 2 Maccabees, the Pharisees and arguably most first-century C.E. Jews affirmed, justifying their belief by reference to the creator God and this God's passion for eventual justice.[5]

The doctrine remained, however, quite imprecise and unfocused. Josephus describes it, confusingly, in various incompatible ways. The rabbis discuss what, precisely, it will mean and how God will do it. Furthermore, the idea could be used metaphorically, particularly for the restoration of Israel after the Exile, as in Ezekiel 37, where the revived dry bones represent the House of Israel.

The early Christian hope for bodily resurrection is clearly Jewish in origin, there being no possible pagan antecedent. Here, however, there is no spectrum of opinion: Earliest Christianity simply believed in resurrection, that is, the overcoming of death by the justice-bringing power of the creator God.

For early Christians, resurrection was seen to consist of passing through death and out the other side into a new sort of bodily life. As Romans 8 shows, Paul clearly believed that God would give new life to the mortal bodies of Christians and indeed to the entire created world: "If the Spirit of the God who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised the Messiah Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who lives in you" (Romans 8:11). This is a radical mutation from within Jewish belief.

Resurrection hope (as one would expect from its Jewish roots) turned those who believed it into a counter-empire, an alternative society that knew the worst that tyrants could do and knew that the true God had the answer. But the Christians had an extra reason for this hope, a reason which, they would have said, explained their otherwise extraordinary focus on, and sharpening of, this particular Jewish belief. For the Christians believed that the Messiah had already been raised from the dead.

Thinking About Easter

Whatever happened at Easter, it was not resuscitation. Easter does not mean that Jesus resumed his previous life as a finite person.

By Marcus J. Borg

When I lecture about the historical Jesus, I am always asked. “What about Easter?”

The question implies two other questions. The first is “What happened?” How bodily or physical was Easter? Did something happen to the corpse of Jesus? Was the tomb empty? The second question is “How are we to understand the Easter stories?” Should we regard them as reports of events that could, in principle, have been recorded with a video-camera? If not, what then are they? Are they fabrications made up to legitimate early Christianity? Or is there another way of understanding them, neither as videocam accounts nor as fabrications?

To turn to the stories, the four canonical Gospels agree that, following Jesus’ crucifixion and burial, his tomb was found empty, and the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John report that the risen Jesus appeared to some of his followers.[1] The Gospels differ on details (who went to the tomb and what they saw), and Matthew, Luke and John each have their own distinctive appearance stories. How literally and “physically” are these texts to be understood?

A good starting point for thinking about this is a distinction between two notions that are often confused: resuscitation and resurrection. *Resuscitation* refers to the reanimation of a corpse: a person dead or thought to be dead comes back to life, resumes the life that she or he had before and *will die again someday*.[2]

Resurrection means something quite different in a first-century Jewish context, it does not refer to resumption of one’s previous life, but to entry *into another kind of existence*, a level or realm that is beyond death. Resuscitation intrinsically involves something happening to a corpse. Resurrection could, but need not, mean that the corpse had been affected; a corpse coming back to life is not the point.

Whatever happened at Easter, it was not resuscitation. Easter does not mean that Jesus resumed his previous life as a finite person, limited in time and space, and then died again someday. Rather, resurrection means that he entered another kind and level of existence, "raised to the right hand of God."[3]

Granting the above, did something nevertheless happen to the corpse of Jesus? Was the tomb empty? The earliest New Testament writer, Paul, says nothing about it, which may or may not be significant. Paul; of course, refers to the resurrection—indeed, it is central for him—but he does not mention an empty tomb. Moreover, the first reference to the empty tomb is rather odd: Mark, writing around 70 C.E., tells us that some women found the tomb empty *but told no one about it*. Some scholars think this indicates that the story of the empty tomb is a late development and that the way Mark tells it explains why it was not widely (or previously) known.[4]

The story of the empty tomb has been considered from another angle as well. In his new book, John Dominic Crossan provocatively raises a prior question: Was there ever a full tomb? That is, was Jesus buried in a tomb at all? This question is based on the fact that the Romans, as an ultimate humiliation, usually denied burial to victims of crucifixion. Crossan suggests that Jesus' body may have been devoured by dogs or buried in a common grave.[5]
The suggestion that there may not have been an empty tomb, or that nothing unusual may have happened to the corpse of Jesus, sometimes strikes people as destructive of the truth of Easter. It is, if one thinks that Easter is about resuscitation. But it is not threatening if one thinks of Easter as resurrection, which need not involve anything happening to a corpse.

I mention our uncertainty about whether something happened to the corpse of Jesus not in order to create uncertainty about Easter, but to highlight Easter's central claim and meaning: The followers of Jesus continued to experience him as a living reality after his death, *but in a radically new way*. This is the uniform testimony of the early Christian movement; for them, Jesus was not simply a physical figure of the past, but a spiritual reality in the present.

For the early Christians, the living Christ was not just an object of belief, but an element of experience. Some "saw" him. Some spoke of him as a living Spirit who continued to be and to operate in the present. Some spoke of dying with him and then living with (or in) him. Some spoke of the living Christ as the Spirit of God present and active in Jesus of Nazareth, which continued to be known and active.

What about the reports of his appearances? Paul provides the earliest (and only "firsthand") reports. Paul's experience of the risen Christ seems to have been visionary, according

to his own words, as well as Luke's threefold report of Paul's Damascus road vision in Acts.[6] It is striking that Paul explicitly and insistently denies that the resurrection body is *physical*; rather, it is spiritual (1 Corinthians 15:12–57). Note that Paul insists on the actuality of resurrection (verses 12–19), and then emphasizes that it is a spiritual body, not the physical body, that is raised (verses 35–50). Thus Paul affirms a "bodily" resurrection, even as he denies that it is physical.

Our only stories of appearances are in the Gospels. Mark has none—simply the empty tomb and the promise that Jesus will appear in Galilee. Matthew then adds an appearance in Galilee.[7] Luke 24 has stories of appearances in and around Jerusalem, but no Galilee stories. John 20–21 has both Galilee and Jerusalem stories.

They portray the risen Christ in quite different ways. Sometimes he is pictured as physical (he cooks breakfast, eats a bite of fish, asks to be touched), sometimes as nonphysical and mysterious (he passes through walls, sometimes suddenly vanishes, and he is capable of being present without being recognized). How should we understand these stories?

My favorite story for illustrating this is the encounter on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35). Two disciples journey with stranger. They do not recognize him, though they talk for hours. At nightfall, they invite him to join them for supper, he breaks the bread, *they recognize him as the risen Christ*, and he vanishes.

Could you have captured this on video? I think not. Yet it speaks powerfully of journeying with the risen Christ as the mysterious stranger in our midst. Crossan, whose views about the body of Jesus were mentioned earlier, puts it well. Noting that the Emmaus road story brings together, in one metaphoric afternoon, several decades of early Christian experience, he writes, "Emmaus never happens. Emmaus always happens."[8]

Speaking as a Christian, I regard these stories not as straightforward events that you could capture on video. Rather, using the language of time and space, they seek to express something on the edge of the ineffable, namely, the mystery of Christ's continuing presence in the lives of Christian as both companion and lord.

To Be Continued…

The many endings of the Gospel of Mark

By Michael W. Holmes



Fisk University Galleries, Nashville, Tennessee

An eerie, golden light greets the three women when they arrive at Jesus' tomb two mornings after the crucifixion. The early morning sky is still dark, the moon just setting, in American artist Henry Osawa Tanner's moody rendition of the scene, "The Three Marys," painted in 1910, and on display at the Fisk University Galleries in Nashville. The long hair and loose gown of the woman on the left identify her as Mary Magdalene.

Francis Ford Coppola filmed two endings for *Apocalypse Now*, and John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* offers a choice of endings. But nothing quite matches the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark for variety. At least nine versions of the ending of Mark can be found among the 1,700 surviving ancient Greek manuscripts and early translations of the gospel.

The differences are not insubstantial. The shortest form ends with the three women at the tomb. The stone is rolled back, the body is gone. An angelic figure informs the women that Jesus has been raised from the dead, but Jesus himself is never seen again. The women, the final verse (Mark 16:8) of this short form records, are so frightened they run away and don't tell anyone what they have seen—or failed to see.

In the longest versions of Mark's ending, by contrast, the resurrected Jesus shows himself to Mary Magdalene, to two disciples on the road and then to the 11 disciples in Jerusalem.

Jesus commands his followers to proclaim "the good news to the whole creation" before he is "taken up into heaven" and seated "at the right hand of God." In the conclusion to this long form, which includes Mark 16:9–20, we learn that the 11 did as Jesus bid them: "They went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it."

The difference is critical—to Bible scholars trying to determine which ending is the earliest, to biographers mapping the course of Jesus' life, to historians trying to trace how it came to be recorded, to theologians contemplating Jesus' resurrection, and to curious readers who simply want to know how the story ends.

To determine, if possible, which ending is the original, let's survey all nine versions and the earliest sources in which they are found.

Form 1 of Mark's ending, like all nine forms, begins with the opening lines of Mark 16, the gospel's final chapter.[a] The stage is set, however, in Mark 15:

It is early evening after the crucifixion but before sundown, when the Sabbath will begin. Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for Jesus' body. Joseph wraps the corpse in a linen shroud and lays it out in a rock-hewn tomb. He then seals the tomb by rolling a stone in front of the entryway.[b] Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses (previously identified in 15:40 as the mother of James and Joses) witness the burial. Thus concludes chapter 15.

Form 1 opens with Mark 16:1. It is now two mornings later (the third day[c]), and the Sabbath has ended. Three of Jesus' followers—Mary Magdalene,[d] Mary the mother of James, and Salome—arrive at the tomb, carrying spices to anoint Jesus' body. Instead of a corpse, however, they find an angelic young man in a white robe seated in the tomb:

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back.

As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you."

And going out they fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Mark 16:1–8

Form 1 ends here, with the three frightened women fleeing the scene.

In the early New Testament manuscripts, including the fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus (shown here) from the British Library, the Gospel of Mark ends with the line "And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (Mark 16:8) (in the second column from the left in the photo).



British Library

This short form is found in two of the oldest (fourth century), most complete and most famous Greek biblical manuscripts:[e] Codex Sinaiticus, which was discovered by the 19th-century German adventurer and scholar Constantin von Tischendorf in St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai (for which it is named), and which is now in the British Library, and Codex Vaticanus, in the Vatican Library.[1]

The only other Greek witness with exactly this form of chapter 16 is a 12th-century copy of Matthew and Mark.[2] We also have copies of Syriac, Sahidic Coptic and Armenian translations dating as early as the fourth century that preserve this short form.[f]

This short ending was well known in the days of the early church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260–340). Eusebius wrote:

> The accurate copies conclude the story according to Mark in the words of the young man seen by the women and saying to them, "Do not be afraid. You seek Jesus…for they were afraid." For the end is here in nearly all the copies of Mark.[3]

Eusebius's report is echoed some decades later by Jerome (c. 342–420), who based his Latin translation of the New Testament on the oldest Greek texts known at the time. Speaking of Mark 16:9–20 (the final verses that are not included in the shortest form), he writes that this section "is found in only a few copies of the Gospel—almost all the Greek copies being without this final passage."[4]

Form 2 is an intermediate form, consisting of Mark 16:1–8 plus two sentences:

> And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

This intermediate ending is found only in Codex Bobbiensis, an Old Latin manuscript that was written in the late fourth or early fifth century but that preserves a text whose roots go back at least to the early third century. We know this because the text is very similar to that cited by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (d. 258), in his writings.

Form 3 is the long form. There are actually two variants of this form, which we'll call 3a and 3b. *Form 3a* consists of chapter 16:1–8 (ending with the women fleeing) plus verses 9–20, which read in full:

> 9Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. 10She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. 11But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.
>
> 12After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. 13And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.
>
> 14Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. 15And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. 16The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. 17And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using

> my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; [18]they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."
>
> [19]So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. [20]And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.
>
> Mark 16:9–20

This long form is found in more than 1,600 Greek manuscripts (or almost 95 percent of all the manuscripts we have). Some date to the late fourth or early fifth century. These include (in approximate chronological order) manuscripts known as Codex Bezae, recognized for its unique readings (named for Calvin's successor at Geneva, Theodore Beza, who once owned the manuscript); Codex Alexandrinus (now in the British Library); and Codex Ephraemi Syri rescriptus (a palimpsest decoded by Tischendorf. The original Greek text was erased in the 12th century and the vellum pages were then reused to copy the sermons of the fourth-century Syrian patriarch Ephraim—thus the description "rescriptus," i.e., "rewritten").

These verses are also found in a wide range of early translations. They include most manuscripts of the Old Latin; the Vulgate (Jerome's Latin translation); the Syriac translations known as the Curetonian (named for a 19th-century editor), the Peshitta (which was eventually accepted as the standard version of the New Testament in Syriac) and the Harklean (a revision made by Thomas of Harkel, bishop of Mabbug, Syria, in 616 of an earlier Syriac version); and the Bohairic Coptic translation.

This long version was known among the early church fathers. The Christian apologist Justin Martyr (d. c. 165) probably knew the longer ending;[5] the church father Irenaeus, who quotes Mark 16:19 in his work *Against Heresies* (written c. 175), certainly did.[6] The apologist Tatian apparently cited it in his *Diatessaron*, a late-second-century harmony of the Four Gospels, and the church father Hippolytus (c. 170–236) quotes 16:17–18. Then there is the observation of Eusebius (also echoed by Jerome), who, after stating that "nearly all the copies of Mark" ended at 16:8, goes on to say: "What follows [that is, verses 9–20] is found but seldom, in some copies but by no means in all."

Form 3b occurs in several manuscripts that include the long form (Mark 16:1–20) but indicate (in different ways) that this longer ending might not be original. In five medieval manuscripts, the long form is accompanied by asterisks or *obeli* (the - symbol), marks traditionally used by ancient scholars to indicate suspect or spurious material. In 12 manuscripts, the long form is accompanied by a critical note. One typical note reads: "In some copies the evangelist

finished here [that is, Mark 16:8]—which is also as far as Eusebius the student of Pamphilius canonized; but in many copies this also [16:9–20] is in circulation."

Form 4 is an expanded version of the long form. It consists of Mark 16:1–20, with an additional passage inserted after verse 14. In Mark 16:14, Jesus upbraids the 11 for failing to believe those who said they had seen him resurrected. In the inserted passage, the disciples make excuses for themselves:

> And they excused themselves, saying, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now"—thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, "The term of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven."

This addition is found today in only a single, fourth- or early-fifth-century manuscript, Codex Washingtonianus, now housed in the Freer Gallery of Art at the Smithsonian. (The additional verses are often called the "Freer Logion," *logion* meaning "saying.")

Luke and Mark stand side by side on this cover panel from the Codex Washingtonianus (compare with photo of page from Codex Washingtonianus), housed in the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery, in Washington, D.C. The encaustic (painted in wax on wood) portraits date to the seventh century—two hundred years later than the text they protect.



Photo courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC/Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1906.298(L) & F1906.274(R)



Photo courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC/Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1906.298(L) & F1906.274(R)

The highlighted passage in this page from the codex is an addition to Mark known only from this manuscript and from a passing reference made to it by Jerome in the fourth century (compare with photo of cover panel from Codex Washingtonianus). Called the Freer Logion, the passage immediately follows Mark 16:14, in which Jesus appears to the disciples in Jerusalem and upbraids them for not believing those who have seen him risen. According to the Freer Logion, the disciples claim it was not their fault; Satan had not allowed "the truth and power of God to prevail." The Freer Logion is part of Form 4, the expanded long form of Mark's gospel.

Although Codex Washingtonianus did not become known until the early part of the 20th century, a shorter version of its distinctive addition had long been known, preserved in a comment by Jerome:

> In some exemplars and especially in Greek manuscripts of Mark, at the end of his gospel, there is written: Afterwards when the eleven had sat down to a meal, Jesus appeared to them and rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not believed those who had seen him after his resurrection. And they made excuses, saying, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to be grasped by unclean spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now."[7]

Our final form, *Form 5*, is a combination form that appears in several manuscripts in four variations, which is how we get a total of nine different versions of Mark. The basic elements of Form 5 are Mark 16:1–8, followed by the intermediate ending of Form 2 ("And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter…"), plus verses 9–20 (this constitutes Form 5a). The variant versions of Form 5 also include critical notes commenting on these passages.

One variant (Form 5b), for example, adds two critical notes.[8] The first note introduces the intermediate ending; it reads: "This also is in circulation." The second critical note follows the intermediate ending and introduces verse 9. It reads: "This also is in circulation after 'For they were afraid'"—a reference to verse 8, in which the frightened women flee the tomb. In other words, the scribe is telling us that in some copies of Mark's gospel, the intermediate ending follows verse 8; in others, verses 9–20 immediately follow verse 8. The other variants (Forms 5c–

d) attach a similar critical note to either the intermediate ending or verses 9–20 (but not both). These critical notes found in Form 5 indicate a continuing awareness of the multiple endings of the Gospel of Mark.

The remarkable diversity among the ancient manuscripts and translations is also reflected in modern English translations. Form 3a (the long form) is transmitted by the King James version (1611), while Form 3b (the long form with asterisks or notes) is represented by the Revised Version of 1881, the Jerusalem Bible (1966) and the New King James Version (1982). The closest representation of Form 1 (the short form) is probably the original Revised Standard Version (1946): Although it does provide the reader with both the intermediate and long endings, it prints them as a footnote in type that is both smaller and italicized, thus signaling that the gospel ends at 16:8. Many modern translations—the New Revised Standard Version (1989), the New Living Translation (1996), the Revised English Bible (1989), the New American Bible (rev. 1986), the Contemporary English Version (1995) and the New American Standard Bible (updated 1995)—offer variations of Form 5, the combination form, typically printing 16:1–8, the intermediate ending, 16:9–20, and various critical notes.

In short, whether examining ancient manuscripts or consulting modern English translations, a reader of the Gospel of Mark encounters an astonishing number of alternative endings for the gospel. Which of these alternatives—if any—comes closest to the original? How did the Gospel of Mark really end?

To answer these questions, scholars make use of textual criticism—the science and art of identifying and restoring the earliest recoverable form(s) of a document. When confronted with two or more competing forms of the same text (usually referred to as variant readings), the text critic attempts to determine which form best accounts for the origin of the other forms. The reading that best explains the existence of the other forms is the one most likely to be the original.

Textual criticism works with two basic kinds of evidence—historical (the surviving manuscripts, early translations and patristic citations) and literary (vocabulary, style and content).[g]

Let’s apply the techniques of textual criticism to Form 4, the expanded form that includes verses 1–20 with an additional passage, the so-called Freer Logion, in which the disciples make excuses for having doubted that Jesus had been resurrected.

The earliest historical evidence comes from Jerome, who referred to this form in his *Dialogue Against Pelagius*, written in 415 C.E. This indicates that the form was probably known by the end of the fourth century, but (according to Jerome, at least) was present in only a few copies, only one of which survives (the fourth- or fifth-century Codex Washingtonianus). In short, the historical support for this form is relatively late and very slender.

The literary evidence is equally weak. Several words and phrases ("this age," "excuse oneself," "to sin" and "to return") used in this inserted passage occur nowhere else in Mark, and some ("terrible things," "term" and "to reply") occur nowhere else in the New Testament. Furthermore, the style and tone of the dialogue do not match that found throughout the rest of the gospel. Based on the narrow historical base and the unusual vocabulary and style, it is clear that Form 4 is a poorly attested, expanded version of Form 3 (the long form) and has no claim to originality.

A similar conclusion may be made about Form 2, the intermediate form, which includes verses 1–8 plus two additional sentences ("And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation"). The oldest manuscript in which this passage is found, the Latin Codex Bobbiensis, preserves a textual tradition that can be traced back to the early third century. Yet this is the only manuscript that includes this ending in a pure form; the other manuscripts that include the intermediate ending insert critical notes or comments suggesting that this is not the standard reading (see under Form 5 above).

The literary evidence for Form 2's intermediate ending is no stronger: First, the additional passage opens with a statement that seemingly contradicts the preceding verse: Verse 8 tells us the women "said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid," but the addition says they told everything "to those around Peter."[9] Second, nowhere in any of the Gospels does one find a florid phrase like "the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation." Form 2 has the feel of something tacked on to 16:8 to bring some sense of closure (awkward though it may be); it has no claim at all to being the original ending of Mark's gospel.

If Form 2 is secondary, then all the permutations of Form 5, which place the intermediate ending between verses 16:1–8 and 16:9–20, are also secondary. They appear to be the work of copyists who were confronted by multiple endings for the same gospel and, rather than choose between them, preserved everything.

Thus, of the nine surviving forms, only two have any serious claim to be original, Form 1 (the short form) and Form 3a (the long form).

Our earliest historical evidence for Form 3a is not a manuscript, but a citation by a church father. Irenaeus's quotation of 16:19 indicates that this long form was in existence by 175 C.E. or so at the latest. At the time of Eusebius in the early fourth century, however, the long form still was found in only a small minority of manuscripts—"in some copies but by no means in all," in his words. In the very late fourth and the fifth century, the long form appeared in several Greek manuscripts and translations. Because this "long" form was part of the textual tradition that became standard in the Byzantine empire, which produced about 90 percent of the surviving Greek manuscripts, it eventually came to dominate the Greek manuscript tradition. In summary, the historical evidence for Form 3a is early (third quarter of the second century) but very narrow until the fifth century or later.

As for the historical evidence for Form 1, the short form, neither Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215) nor Origen (c. 185–c. 254) indicates any awareness of anything beyond 16:8. But this is an argument from silence, so not too much weight can be placed on it. More substantial is Eusebius's testimony in the early fourth century that the "accurate"—indeed, as he says, "nearly all"—copies of Mark end at 16:8. The earliest manuscript witnesses for Form 1, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, date to about the same time, but have been shown to preserve a textual tradition that dates back to around the time of Irenaeus (c. 175).[h]

To these manuscripts we must add all those that preserve the intermediate ending (Forms 2 and 5), since they testify indirectly to a shorter form that ended at 16:8. We must also add the manuscripts listed under Form 3b, in particular those that include along with 16:9–20 a critical note ("In some copies the evangelist finished here"), since they too testify to the existence of manuscripts that end at 16:8. Finally, the evidence of the early translations that range from Syria (the fourth-century Sinaitic Syriac version) to North Africa (the Old Latin Codex Bobbiensis) demonstrates that the short form was widely dispersed geographically at an early period.

In summary, the evidence for a short form of Mark ending at 16:8 is both early (mid- to late second century) and broad.

Most textual critics agree that the evidence supporting the short form (Form 1) outweighs the evidence for the long form (Form 3a). But because both forms are demonstrably early, the historical evidence, though favoring one form over the other, is not decisive. Before choosing between them, we must evaluate the literary evidence.

In favor of the originality of the long form, some scholars have suggested that the short form was created by Alexandrian biblical scholars who were embarrassed by the references to handling snakes and drinking poison and therefore deliberately excised verses 9–20.[10] But why would they have excised 12 verses, when eliminating only two (verses 17–18) would have done the job?

Two further considerations stand against this suggestion. First, it flies in the face of virtually everything that is known about the careful habits of ancient Alexandrian scholars: While they "obelized" or otherwise marked passages that aroused their suspicion, they did not omit them. Second, substantial literary evidence suggests that 16:9–20 is a later addition to the last chapter of Mark. To begin with, the long form opens with a very awkward transition: Whereas the subject of 16:8 is the women fleeing the tomb, the subject of 16:9 ("Now after he rose") is not identified, and must be inferred from the context (indeed, Jesus is not mentioned by name until 16:19). Mary Magdalene, who is mentioned in 16:1 for the third time (see 15:40, 47), is reintroduced in 16:9 as though she were a new character ("Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons"), while the other women named in 16:1–8, Mary the mother of James and Salome, are not even mentioned.

Furthermore, the long form does not fulfill the promise made in Mark 16:7, in which the young man in the tomb predicts the appearance of the risen Jesus in Galilee; instead it recounts a series of resurrection appearances that have been derived from the accounts in Matthew, Luke and John.[11]

The vocabulary and style are also suspect: At least 17 words or phrases (for example, "form," 16:12; "not believe," 16:11, 16) found in 16:9–20 either do not occur elsewhere in Mark or are used here with a different sense than elsewhere in the gospel, and three words or phrases ("those who had been with him," 16:12; "deadly" and "they will recover," 16:18) occur nowhere else in the New Testament. Also, two of Mark's favorite transitional words, "immediately" (used 40 times in Mark) and "again" (26 times in Mark) don't occur at all in 16:9–20.[12]

In the end, verses 9–20 give every indication of having been tacked on to the end of 16:8, probably sometime early in the second century. In short, the literary evidence confirms what the historical evidence suggests: The short form, Form 1, 16:1–8, represents the earliest recoverable ending of Mark.

But is the earliest recoverable ending the original ending? It does make for an abrupt and grammatically awkward conclusion to the gospel, and the reader is left with no account of any

resurrection appearances. Moreover, in Mark 14:28, Jesus makes a promise to the 12 disciples ("After I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee"), but this promise remains unfulfilled. For these reasons, many scholars have suggested that the original ending of Mark has been lost or that the gospel was never finished.[13]

Abrupt and awkward are not the same as impossible, however, as has been noted by those scholars who identify 16:1–8 as the complete, original ending.[14] Furthermore, the absence of a resurrection appearance or the fulfillment of the promise of 14:28, while certainly surprising, may well be deliberate. In addition, the odds that a book would be left unfinished or be damaged precisely at a point that could be taken as the end, in such a way that no one would notice that the damage had occurred, strike many scholars as simply incredible.

Ironically, the answer to our initial question ("How did the Gospel of Mark really end?"), rather than leading us to a conclusion, has opened up more questions. In the end (if there is an end), does any of it matter?

In the words of one Marcan scholar, "No point in a story is as significant for appreciation and interpretation as its ending."[15] A gospel that ends at 16:8 is open-ended, tensive; the turmoil created by the juxtaposition of hope in 16:7 (where the angelic figure promises the women that Jesus "is going ahead of you to Galilee") and disappointment in 16:8 ("they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid") is unresolved. The reader is provoked and challenged.

The intermediate and longer endings, however—as well as modern hypotheses about a long-lost ending and contemporary translations that print multiple endings—all represent attempts to resolve this tension. As the literary scholar Frank Kermode has noted, unfinished, discordant stories are not easily tolerated.[16]

And so, in the end, the endings of Mark leave us as readers with a question: How will we choose to end the matter? Will we tolerate the ambiguity, or seek to resolve it? Will we force an ending upon the gospel that accords with our expectations, or will we see the ending not as an ending at all, but as a beginning that forces us to rethink our expectations?

The First Appearance Seen Twice

Sidebar to: To Be Continued…



National Gallery, London

Noli Me Tangere—“Don’t Touch Me”—the title of this oil painting (c. 1550) by Titian, now in London’s National Gallery, is borrowed from the Gospel of John (20:17), where the resurrected Jesus warns Mary Magdalene to stay away because he has not yet ascended to his father. The longer ending of the Gospel of Mark also describes their encounter, Jesus’ first after the resurrection: “Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went out and told those who had been with him” (Mark 16:9–10). In Titian’s painting, Mary grasps a jar of ointment in one hand. Jesus holds either a hoe—perhaps an attempt to explain why, in John’s gospel, Mary first mistakes Jesus for a gardener—or a shepherd’s staff. That Jesus has risen from the dead is apparent from the nail holes in his feet and the billowing white shroud that he has tied around his neck as a cloak.

Contemporary artist Wayne Forte based his painting on Titian’s earlier work. Forte’s “Really Wanna Touch You” from 1989 is painted in acrylic on rag paper mounted on wood with bolts, a baseball (painted to represent a globe), a gardenia (intended to represent grace; lower left), and a ruler (the law; lower right). The words Noli me tangere are written in an arc above the Magdalene. The bloody handprints of the crucified Jesus appear in the top corners of the plywood frame. Measuring 53 by 50 inches, Forte’s painting is about a foot wider than Titian’s.



Courtesy of the Artist

Forte borrowed his title from a Beatles song not only to make the scene more accessible to contemporary audiences but also to convey Mary's very human desire to touch her Lord. Titian's work hangs in the National Gallery, in London; Forte's is in a private collection.

The Long and Short of Mark's Ending

Sidebar to: To Be Continued…

Form 1: Short Form

Mark 16:1–8

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you. And going out they fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.



British Library

Form 2: Intermediate Form

equals Mark 16:1–8 + intermediate ending

Mark 16:1–8

(quoted under Form 1)

plus intermediate ending

> And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

Form 3: Long Form

3a equals Mark 16:1–8 + Mark 16:9–20

Mark 16:1–8

(quoted under Form 1)

plus Mark 16:9–20

> Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

> Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover. So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

3b equals Mark 16:1–20 + asterisks, *obeli* or a critical note

Mark 16:1–20
(quoted under Forms 1 and 3a)

plus asterisks, *obeli* or a critical note
In some copies the evangelist finished here [that is, Mark 16:8]
…but in many copies this also [16:9–20] is in circulation.

Form 4: Expanded Long Form

equals Mark 16:1–14 + Freer Logion + Mark 16:15–20

Mark 16:1–14
(quoted under Forms 1 and 3)

plus Freer Logion

> And they excused themselves, saying, “This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now”—thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, “The term of years of Satan’s power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin

no more, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven."

plus Mark 16:15–20

(quoted under Form 3)



Freer Gallery/Smithsonian

Form 5: Combination Form

5a-d equals Mark 16:1–8 + critical note + intermediate ending + critical note + Mark 16:9–20

Mark 16:1–8

(quoted under Form 1)

plus critical note

This also is in circulation.

plus intermediate ending

(quoted under Form 2)

plus critical note

This also is in circulation after "For they were afraid."

plus 16:9–20

(quoted under Form 3)

The Resurrection



© 1993 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan 1917 (17.190.47)

The Road to Emmaus and the Noli Me Tangere (Do Not Touch Me). Ivory, early 12th century, northern Spain, 10 5/8 x 5 1/8 inches.

"Don't touch me!" Jesus cries out to Mary Magdalene as she reaches toward the risen Lord, in the lower register of this ivory plaque. The two figures are caught in a dance-like pose, with Jesus (at right) twisting away from Mary, who extends both hands forward. The lines of their swirling clothing are accentuated by a heavy border, carved to imitate embroidered pearls. The top register depicts an event that will take place later in the same day, when Jesus (center) meets two of his disciples (carrying walking stick, purse and water gourd) on the road to Emmaus.

One of Jesus' most devoted followers, Mary Magdalene is among the first to discover Jesus' empty tomb. In the Gospel of John 20:15, Jesus asks Mary, "Woman, why are you weeping?" when he finds her outside the tomb. Mistaking him for a gardener, she responds, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus appeals to her by calling her name, "Mary!" Suddenly recognizing him, she turns toward Jesus and cries out, "Rabboni!" (My Teacher). Jesus warns her not to touch him, for he has not yet ascended to the Father. Later that day, according to the Gospel of Luke 24, Jesus approached two of his followers on the Emmaus road. These men, however, are less quick than the Magdalene to recognize Jesus. It is not until Jesus shares a meal with these disciples that their minds are "opened" and they know Jesus.

The medieval French bishop Marbod of Rennes, writing not long before this plaque was carved, contemplated Jesus' choice of Mary Magdalene as the first witness of the Resurrection:

Hymn of the Magdalene

Mary was Mother of the Lord
And Lazarus's sister was a Mary too,
Both bright heavens to befriend men's souls.
The handmaid no way equal to her lady
But shares her radiant name.
The one is the very symbol of repentance,
The other the mother of all pardon.
The one was the virgin of virgins, saint of all saints,
The other had known all sin and company kept with sinners.
One Mary bore the feet that the other held, weeping,
And because she greatly loved she was purified of her stain…
To her the risen Lord had first shown himself
And made his first apostle
A woman of ill fame.

(translated from Latin by Helen Waddell)

To the Tomb



Erich Lessing

Apostles Peter and John Hurry to the Tomb on the Morning of the Resurrection by Eugene Burnand. Oil on canvas, 1898. Collection Musée d'Orsay, Paris

The apostles Peter (right) and John, just awakened by an excited Mary Magdalene, hurry to see whether she is telling them the truth—that the stone sealing Jesus' tomb has been rolled aside and that the tomb lies empty. In this 1898 painting by the Swiss artist Eugene Burnand, the apostles' faces betray a mixture of emotions: doubt (for how could the tomb be empty?), grief (for their crucified master and friend), as well as eager anticipation.

Only the Gospel of John records this early morning run to the tomb. Artist Burnand captures the crisp chill of the air: Peter clasps his cloak around himself and his younger companion (John, identified only as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" in John 20:2) rubs his hands for warmth.

Though it is not a race, John in his haste is already pulling ahead. John's gospel records that "they both ran, but the other disciple [John] outran Peter" (John 20:4). Fleeter of foot, John arrived first at the tomb, but he did not enter. Instead he paused at the door, while Peter went in: "He [Peter] saw the linen cloths lying there, and the cloth which had been on his head … Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed" (John 20:6–8).

By leaving the tomb out of his painting, Burnand best illustrates what they found: a disappearance, an absence. But this absence is enough to make believers of them.

Notes

Emmaus Where Christ Appeared

1. Vincent Michel, “Emmaus in Lukas 24, 13: Traditionsentwickling und Textkritik.” In Karl-Heinz Fleckenstein, Mikko Louhivouri and Rainer Riesner, *Emmaus in Judäa: Geschichte-Exegese-Archäologie* (Basel: Brunnen, 2003), pp. 122–141.
2. S.v. “Colonia, Emmaus, Moza,” Yoram Tsafrir, Leah Di Segni and Judith Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani Judaea-Palaestina (*Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), p.105. This entry has a very extensive bibliography.
3. Fleckenstein, “Zur Geschichte der Erforschung von Emmaus/Nikopolis,” in Fleckenstein et al., *Emmaus in Judäa*, pp. 219 and 286–289.
4. Avi-Yonah, “Emmaus.”
5. Alviero Niccacci, “Der Skarabäus von Amwas, in Fleckenstein et al., *Emmaus in Judäa*, pp. 297–298.
6. Fleckenstein, “Inschriften and Münzen aus Emmaus/Nikopolis,” in *Emmaus in Judäa*, pp. 279–280.
7. Fleckenstein, “Inschriften and Münzen aus Emmaus/Nikopolis,” in Fleckenstein et al., *Emmaus in Judäa*, pp. 284–285.
8. Fleckenstein, “Inschriften and Münzen aus Emmaus/Nikopolis,” in Fleckenstein et al., *Emmaus in Judäa*, pp. 293–294.
9. Fleckenstein, “Das Nilus-Mosaik— Versuch einer Interpretation,” in Fleckenstein et al., *Emmaus in Judäa*, pp. 274–278.

Another Contender for the Honor

Sidebar to: Emmaus: Where Christ Appeared

1. Bellarmino Bagatti, *Emmaus-Qubeibeh*, translated by Raphael Bonanno (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1993), p.X.

The Resurrection of Resurrection

1. In more relaxed mode, however, some ancient Greek burial customs provided not only basic necessities for the hereafter, but also toys and games, and in some special cases, slaves and even wives.
2. Passages such as Job 19:25–27, which in the King James Version seems to predict bodily resurrection more solidly than the Hebrew warrants, may have gained this meaning when read in the Septuagint.
3. Philo, *On the Giants* 14.
4. Wisdom of Solomon 3:1–3, often quoted as supporting “immortality,” must be read in the context of 1:16–3:9. The speech of “the wicked” (2:1–20) is intended as a classic statement of the pagan denial of resurrection; 3:7–9 is the answer. At the moment, the righteous souls are in God’s hand, but a new day is coming in which they will rule the world.
5. It is thus misleading to describe this view as “a resolute view of death as resurrection,” as does Jon Davies, in *Death, Burial and Rebirth in the Religions of Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 122.

Thinking About Easter

1. The exception is Mark. In 16:1–8, Mark reports the *promise* that Jesus will appear in Galilee, but has no stories of appearances. (Note that Mark 16:9–20, which does report appearances, is a later addition to Mark.) It is interesting that two very early layers of the gospel tradition (Q and early Thomas [see, respectively, Stephen J. Patterson, “Q—The Lost Gospel,” BR 09:05; and Helmut Koester and Stephen J. Patterson, “The Gospel of Thomas—Does It Contain Authentic Sayings of Jesus?” BR 06:02]) do not refer to the resurrection or Easter *at all*. Is this evidence for forms of early Christianity whose central message was not about death and resurrection? Thomas, it should be noted, begins by speaking of the words of the *living* Jesus; thus Thomas may paint to a community that affirmed the living Christ without mentioning (or emphasizing) resurrection/Easter.

2. The Bible reports several resuscitations: in the Hebrew Bible, the widow’s son of Zarepath (1 Kings 17:17–24); in the New Testament, the widow’s son in Nain (Luke 7:11–17), Lazarus (John 11:1–44) and others. Although these are sometimes called “resurrections” or “raisings,” they are in fact resuscitations: a person comes back to terrestrial life and will die again someday. See Jarl Fossum, “Understanding Jesus’ Miracles,” in this issue.

3. Referred to a number of times in the New Testament (Acts 2:32–35, 5:31, 7:55–56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22, etc.) as well as in Christian creeds. As a royal metaphor, “the right hand of God” suggests a place of honor and authority, and as a theological metaphor in the context of monotheism, it suggests participation in the power and authority of God.

4. As the story develops, Matthew adds guards at the tomb (Matthew 27:62–66; 28:4, 11–15).

5. John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), pp. 123–158. The Gospels, of course, report that an exception was made for Jesus through the intervention of Joseph of Arimathea, a text that Crossan sees as the creation of early Christian scribes who “historicized” prophecy.

6. “See Acts 9:1–9, 22:6–11, 26:12–18. From Luke and not from Paul himself, the accounts in Acts are second hand. For references in Paul, see Galatians 1:11–17; 1 Corinthians 15:3–8; and probably 2 Corinthians 12:1–4. For a striking analysis of Paul’s conversion experience (his experience of the risen Christ) within a framework of Jewish mysticism, see Alan Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostleship and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), esp. pp. 34–71.

7. Matthew 28:16–20, with the risen Christ speaking the famous words: “Go ye therefore and make disciples. …”

8. Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, p. 197.

To Be Continued…

a. The chapter divisions in use today were introduced by Stephen Langton (famous for wrestling the Magna Carta from King John) in the early 13th century.

b. On the stone that sealed Jesus’ tomb, see Amos Kloner, “Did a Rolling Stone Close Jesus’ Tomb?” **BAR** 25:05.

c. In the Jewish tradition of counting days, both the beginning and ending day are included in the count. Thus, the resurrection (on Sunday) is said to occur on the third day after the crucifixion (on Friday).

d. For more on this character, see Jane Schaberg, “How Mary Magdalene Became a Whore,” **BR** 08:05.

e. For a summary of the most important New Testament manuscripts, see “Glossary: New Testament Manuscripts—Uncials, Minuscules, Palimpsests and All That Stuff,” **BR** 06:01.

f. Coptic was the language spoken by the native population of Egypt from about the third to the tenth century C.E. (after which Arabic began to supplant it). Sahidic and Bohairic were the most important of its many dialects. Syriac, a branch of the Aramaic language, was spoken in Syria and Mesopotamia from just before the beginning of the Christian era until it was eventually displaced by Arabic. Latin, the language of the Roman imperial system, was also the spoken language of many people throughout the western part of the Roman empire, especially in Italy and North Africa. Armenian was the spoken language of the ancient kingdom of Armenia; a 36-letter alphabet was created for it in about 406 C.E.

g. For an another example of a text critic at work, see Steve Mason, "Where Was Jesus Born? O Little Town of…Nazareth?" **BR** 1601.

h. The discovery of papyrus copies of the Gospels of Luke and John dating from c. 200 C.E. or a bit earlier that preserve a text very similar to the text of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus demonstrates that these two fourth-century manuscripts in fact preserve a textual tradition that dates back at least to around the time of Irenaeus. These papyri, known as P66 and P75, are both in the Bodmer collection in Geneva.

1. On the possibility that these are two of the 50 manuscripts that the Emperor Constantine requested from Eusebius of Caesarea, see T.C. Skeat, "The Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus, and Constantine," *Journal of Theological Studies* 50:2 (1999), pp. 583–625.

2. Manuscript 304. There are two other manuscripts, 1420 and 2386, which appear to end at 16:8, but in each case it seems that the last leaf of these two copies of Mark is missing.

3. *From Gospel Questions and Solutions Addressed to Marinus*, a lost work of which only a few excerpts, preserved in a manuscript in the Vatican Library, are known. See J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, *The Golden Age of Patristic Literature* (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1960; reprint, Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1983), p. 337.

4. Jerome, *Letter* 120.3 (to Hedibia).

5. Justin Martyr, *Apology* 1.45, where he uses five words that also occur (in a different order) in 16:20.

6. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.10.6.

7. Jerome, *Against Pelagius* 2.15.

8. This variant appears in the eighth-century Codex Regius, in two unnamed Greek manuscripts dating to the seventh and eighth centuries and in one Sahidic Coptic translation.

9. The tension between Mark 16:8 and the addition is relieved somewhat in Codex Bobbiensis by the omission of the phrase "they said nothing to anyone."

10. For this argument see William R. Farmer, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 70–72.

11. See Mark 16:9: cf. Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9–11: cf. John 20:11–18, Luke 24:10–11; Mark 16:12–13: cf. Luke 24:13–35; Mark 16:14–16: cf. Matthew 28:16–20, Luke 24:36–38; Mark 16:17–18: cf. Luke 10:17–20; Mark 16:19: cf. Luke 24:50–53.

As James A. Kelhoffer has recently demonstrated, "The numerous allusions to Matthew, Luke and John—especially to the ends of these writings—demonstrate…that the author of Mark 16:9–20 wrote in conscious dependence on one or more MSS [manuscripts] of the NT [New Testament] Gospels" (Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000], p. 150). In this regard, it should also be noticed that whereas Matthew and Luke, in passages where they parallel Mark 1:1–16:8, consistently abridge Mark, it is the other way around in 16:9–20: The long form of Mark offers an abridgement of material from the other gospels.

12. For a detailed discussion see J.K. Elliott, "The Text and Language of the Endings to Mark's Gospel," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 27 (1971), pp. 255–262; reprinted in Elliott, ed., *The Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), pp. 203–211.

13. For a detailed and sophisticated presentation, see Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 1009–1021.

14. Although the grammatically unusual ending is rare, it is not unparalleled. For the evidence and details, see Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Promise and the Failure—Mark 16:7, 8, " *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989), pp. 283–300.

15. Donald H. Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), p. 107.

16. See Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 3–31, 58–59.